

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A voice messaging system, comprising:
a telephone line interface;
a voice recorder/playback module;
a controller adapted to control functions of said voice
messaging system; and
a ring signal bypass module adapted to detect a presence of
10 a non-ring signal indicating a presence of an incoming call, and to cause
said telephone line interface to place a telephone line in an off-hook
condition before reception of an initial ring signal relating to said incoming
call.

- 15 2. The voice messaging system according to claim 1,
wherein:
said telephone line interface is adapted to detect a line
reversal on said telephone line.

- 20 3. The voice messaging system according to claim 1,
wherein:
said voice messaging system is a telephone answering
device.

- 25 4. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice
messaging system, comprising:
receiving a non-ring signal indicating a presence of an
incoming call to said voice messaging system; and
answering said incoming call by said voice messaging
30 system before a reception of any ring signal.

5. The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, wherein said answering comprises:

5 substantially immediately playing an outgoing greeting message to a caller associated with said incoming call without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call; and
allowing said caller to record a voice message.

6. The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, wherein said answering comprises:

substantially immediately allowing a caller associated with said incoming call to record a voice message without requiring reception
15 of any ring signal relating to said incoming call.

7. The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, further comprising:

inputting a request for a transmission of said non-ring signal
20 from a calling party's telephone.

8. Apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

means for receiving a non-ring signal indicating a presence
25 of an incoming call to said voice messaging system; and

means for answering said incoming call by said voice messaging system before a reception of any ring signal.

9. The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, wherein said means for answering comprises:

5 means for substantially immediately playing an outgoing greeting message to a caller associated with said incoming call without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call; and

means for allowing said caller to record a voice message.

10. The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, wherein said means for answering comprises:

means for substantially immediately allowing a caller associated with said incoming call to record a voice message without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call.

11. The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, further comprising:

means for inputting a request for a transmission of said non-ring signal from a calling party's telephone.

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12. A method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party, said voice messaging system including voice message memory for recording a voice message, the method comprising:

5 providing a ring signal bypass module in said voice messaging system;

activating said ring signal bypass module based on a request from said calling party; and

10 bypassing all ring signals to said voice messaging system by answering a call from said calling party before a reception of any ring signal.

13. The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim 12, further comprising:

15 substantially immediately allowing said calling party to record a voice message in said voice message memory before reception of any ring signal.

14. The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim 12, further comprising:

entering a request for performance of said step of bypassing all ring signals by said calling party.

25 15. The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim 12, wherein:

30 said request is entered by said calling party before a telephone number of said called party is dialed by said calling party.

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16. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

- 5 receiving a ring signal indicating a presence of an incoming telephone call to said voice messaging system;
answering said incoming telephone call;
detecting input of a predetermined code by said caller; and
if said predetermined code is input by said caller, allowing recording of a voice message by a caller without providing any audible
10 ring signal to a called party.

17. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

- 15 receiving a ring signal from a central office indicating a presence of an incoming call to said voice messaging system; and
providing a caller a choice to bypass an audible ring signal to a user of said voice messaging system.

18. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 17, further comprising:

- 20 recording a voice message from said caller without first providing an audible ring signal to a user of said voice messaging system.

19. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 17, wherein:

- 25 by default, said voice messaging system does not audibly ring before recording a voice message.

20. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 17, wherein:

by default, said voice messaging system audibly rings up to a predetermined number of times before recording a voice message.

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21. A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 17, wherein:

said incoming call is answered by said voice messaging system substantially without audibly ringing said voice messaging system.

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SCANNED